

The grace period for student loan payments is over. Here's what you need to know

By ADRIANA MORGA

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The 12-month grace period for student loan borrowers ended on Sept. 30. The "on-ramp" period helped borrowers who are struggling to make payments avoid the risk of defaulting and hurting their credit score.

"The end of the on-ramp period means the beginning of the potentially harsh consequences for student loan borrowers who are not able to make payments," said Persis Yu, Deputy Executive Director at the Student Borrower Protection Center.

Around 43 million Americans have student loan debt, amounting to \$1.5 trillion.



A 19-foot Airstream Caravel on loan to the League of Women Voters of Ohio visits the main campus of the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024, as the group works to register and engage student voters.

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Associated Press

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The grace period for student loan payments is over. Here's what you need to know

Continued from Front

Around eight million of those borrowers had enrolled in the SAVE plan, the newest income-driven repayment plan that extended the eligibility for borrowers to have affordable monthly student loan payments. However, this plan is currently on hold due to legal challenges.

With the on-ramp period and a separate program known as Fresh Start ending and the SAVE plan on hold, student loan borrowers who are struggling to afford their monthly payments have fewer options, added Yu. Student loan borrowers who haven't been able to afford their monthly payments must consider their options to avoid going into default.

If you have student loans, here's what you need to know.

What was the on-ramp period?

The Education Department implemented this grace period to ease the borrower's transition to make payments after a three-year payment pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this year-long period, borrowers were encouraged to keep making payments since interest continued to accumulate.

"Normally, loans will default if you fall about nine months behind on making payments, but during this on-ramp period, missed payments would not move people towards defaulting



UCLA students celebrate during a commencement ceremony inside Pauley Pavilion on UCLA campus, in Los Angeles, June 14, 2024.

Associated Press

and then being subject to forced collections. However, if you missed payments, you still be falling behind ultimately on repaying your loans," said Abby Shaforth, director of National Consumer Law Center's Student Loan Borrower Assistance Project.

Since this grace period has ended, student loan borrowers who don't make payments will go delinquent or, if their loans are not paid for nine months, go into default.

Borrowers who cannot afford to make payments can apply for deferment or forbearance, which pause payments, though interest continues to accrue.

What happens if I don't make my payments?

Borrowers who can't or don't pay risk delinquency

and eventually default. That can badly hurt your credit rating and make you ineligible for additional aid and government benefits. If a borrower missed one month's payment, they will start receiving email notifications, said Shaforth. Once the loan hasn't been paid for three months, loan servicers notify to the credit reporting agencies that the loan is delinquent, affecting your credit history. Once the borrower hasn't paid the loan for nine months, the loan goes into default.

If you're struggling to pay, advisers first encourage you to check if you qualify for an income-driven repayment plan, which determines your payments by looking at your expenses. You can see whether you

qualify by visiting the Federal Student Aid website. If you've worked for a government agency or a non-profit organization, you could also be eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which forgives student debt after 10 years.

What happens when a loan goes into default?

When you fall behind on a loan by 270 days — roughly 9 months — the loan appears on your credit report as being in default.

Once a loan is in default, it goes into collections. This means the government can garnish wages (without a court order) to go towards paying back the loan, intercept tax refunds, and seize portions of Social Security checks and other benefit payments.

What if I can't pay?

If your budget doesn't allow you to resume payments, it's important to know how to navigate the possibility of default and delinquency on a student loan. Both can hurt your credit rating, which would make you ineligible for additional aid.

If you're in a short-term financial bind, you may qualify for deferment or forbearance — allowing you to temporarily suspend payment.

To determine whether deferment or forbearance are good options for you, you can contact your loan servicer. One thing to note: interest still accrues during deferment or forbearance. Both can also impact potential loan forgiveness options. Depending on the conditions of your deferment or forbearance, it may make sense to continue paying the interest during the payment suspension.

What is an income-driven repayment plan?

The U.S. Education Department offers several plans for repaying federal student loans. Under the standard plan, borrowers are charged a fixed monthly amount that ensures all their debt will be repaid after 10 years. But if borrowers have difficulty paying that amount, they can enroll in one of several plans that offer lower monthly payments based on income and family size. Those are known as income-driven repayment plans. □

Justice Department finds Georgia is 'deliberately indifferent' to unchecked abuses at its prisons

BY JEFF MARTIN, KEVIN McGILL and ALANNA DURKIN
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia prison officials are "deliberately indifferent" to unchecked deadly violence, widespread drug use, extortion and sexual abuse at state lockups, the U.S. Justice Department said Tuesday, threatening to sue the state if it doesn't quickly take steps to curb rampant violations of prisoners' Eighth Amendment protections against cruel punishment.

Prison officials responded with a statement saying the prison system "operates in a manner exceeding the requirements of the United States Constitution" and decrying the possibility of "years of expensive and unproductive court monitoring" by federal officials. Allegations of violence, chaos and "grossly inadequate" staffing are laid out in the Justice Department's grim 93-page report, the result of a state-wide civil rights investigation into Georgia prisons announced in September 2021. The system holds an estimated 50,000 people. "In America, time in prison should not be a sentence to death, torture or rape," Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, who oversees the Justice Department's civil rights division, said Tuesday as she discussed the findings at an Atlanta news conference. In its response, the Georgia Department of Corrections said it was "extremely disappointed" in the accusations. The Justice Department's findings "reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the current challenges of operating any prison system," the agency said.

Who's in control?

The report said large, sophisticated gangs run prison black markets trafficking in drugs, weapons and electronic devices such as drones and smart phones. Officials fight the flow of contraband through the



Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, center, of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division speaks about a new Department of Justice report about the state of Georgia's prisons at a press conference at the Richard B. Russell Federal Building in Atlanta, Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024. On her left is U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan for the Northern District of Georgia and on her right are U.S. Attorney Peter D. Leary for the Middle District of Georgia and U.S. Attorney Jill E. Steinberg for the Southern District of Georgia. (

Associated Press

arrest of smugglers and mass searches. "However, the constant flow of contraband underscores that these efforts have been insufficient," the report said. Inmate gangs have allegedly "co-opted" some administrative functions, including bed assignments, said Ryan Buchanan, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia. "The leadership of the Georgia Department of Corrections has lost control of its facilities."

Death behind bars

The number of homicides among prisoners has grown over the years from seven in 2018 to 35 in 2023, the report said. The report said there were five homicides at four different prisons in just one month in 2023. And the homicide numbers are often hard to nail down in Georgia Department of Corrections statistics, according to the report. "GDC reported in its June 2024 mortality data that, for the first five months of 2024, there were 6 homicides, even though at least 18 deaths were categorized as homicides in GDC incident reports, and GDC assured us these suspected homicides were under investigation," the report said. Sexual abuse allegations Multiple allegations of sexual abuse are recount-

ed in the report, including abuse of LGBTQ inmates. A transgender woman reported being sexually assaulted at knifepoint. Another inmate said he was "extorted for money" and sexually abused after six people entered his cell. "In March 2021, a man from Georgia State Prison who had to be hospitalized due to physical injuries and food deprivation reported his cellmate had been sexually assaulting and raping him over time," the report said. Again, the true number of such assaults may be higher. Victims are often reluctant to report sexual abuse, the report noted. □

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Is the food in the fridge still good? California wants to end the guessing game

By TRÂN NGUYỄN

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— California wants to help end the everyday household debate over whether the food in the fridge is still good to eat.

Food labels that say “sell by” or “best before” are misleading because they have no universal meaning under current laws. Now California wants to crack down on such practices, bidding to help consumers stop playing guessing games with produce and other items in their fridges.

The state is the first to ban food labels such as “sell by” or “best before” under a law signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom. The legislation signed by Newsom over the weekend aims at reducing both food waste and the state’s climate-warming emissions.

There are more than 50 different date labels on packaged food sold in stores, but the information is largely unregulated and does not relate to food safety. “Sell by” dates, for example, often act as a guide for stores to pull products from the shelf and not as an indicator of whether the product is still safe to consume.

With no federal regulations dictating what information



A customer looks at refrigerated items at a Grocery Outlet store in Pleasanton, Calif., Thursday, Sept. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

these labels should include, the stamps have led to consumer confusion and nearly 20% of the nation’s food waste, according to the Food and Drug Administration. In California, that’s about 6 million tons of unexpired food that’s tossed in the trash each year.

The new law “is a monumental step to keep money in the pockets of consumers while helping the environment and the planet,” she added in her statement.

The law is set to take effect in July 2026, establishing a new standard for food labeling in California. It will

require the use of “Best if Used By” label to signal peak quality and “Use By” label for product safety, an approach recommended by federal agencies. The law provides exemption for eggs, beer and other malt beverages.

The California law comes as similar efforts around the country remain halted at the federal level. State lawmakers and advocates said they also spent the last decade trying to pass legislation to reduce food labeling confusion and cut down on food waste. A similar measure died before reaching

the governor’s desk in 2016. Then-Gov. Jerry Brown also signed a bill in 2017 to establish voluntary uniform-labeling protocol but few companies ended up following the honor system.

“Widespread implementation that was basically committed to by industry wasn’t happening,” said Erica Parker with Californians Against Waste, who sponsored the bill. “Food waste rates are not decreasing, they’re increasing.”

Supporters hope the legislation could pave the way for new food labeling standards in the U.S., though it’s

not immediately clear if the new law and the massive California market will push companies to standardize food labeling for all products in the country.

“California has such a large market share that we do think this will push manufacturers,” said Nina Sevilla with Natural Resources Defense Council, who also sponsored the bill. “The hope is that California serves as a model either for other states or ultimately to push action at the federal level.”

Shopper Jasmine Acosta, 23, said she believes most people don’t understand the current language used on food labels.

“It’s confusing to most consumers,” Acosta told The Associated Press as she shopped Tuesday at a Smart & Final store in Los Angeles.

She used to work at a small grocery store, so she’s developed the habit of examining her meat purchases for smell or discoloration before using the food. A sell-by date helps the grocer adhere to a “first in first out” method for its products and get ready for the next shipment arrival, but doesn’t mean the food has gone bad, according to Acosta. □

Historic ship could soon become the world’s largest artificial reef

By KATE PAYNE

Associated Press/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) —

A historic ocean liner that

once ferried immigrants, Hollywood stars and heads of state may soon find its final resting place at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico,

after a Florida county inked a tentative deal to turn the ship into the world’s largest artificial reef.

The contract approved Tuesday by officials in Okaloosa County on Florida’s coastal Panhandle is contingent upon the resolution of court-imposed mediation, after a judge ordered the storied but aging ship to vacate its berth at a pier in Philadelphia, following a yearslong dispute over rent and dockage fees.

The largest passenger ship ever built in the U.S., the SS United States shattered a record for the fastest transatlantic crossing by a passenger liner on its maiden voyage in 1952, The Asso-

ciated Press reported from aboard the vessel.

But the ship has been in a race against time to find a new home, with conservationists scrambling to find an alternative to scrapping the massive ocean liner, which is more than 100 feet (30 meters) longer than the Titanic.

The solution: sink it on purpose and create what supporters hope will be a barnacle-encrusted star in Okaloosa County’s constellation of more than 500 artificial reefs, making it a signature diving attraction that could generate millions of dollars a year in local tourism spending for scuba shops, charter fishing

boats and hotels.

“To have an opportunity to have the SS United States right here by our shore is a heritage and a legacy that is generational,” said Okaloosa County Commissioner Mel Ponder. “I’m very excited for not only what it does for the diving community, but also the fishing community, but the community at large.”

The deal to buy the ship, which officials said could cost more than \$10 million, could close in a matter of weeks, pending court mediation. The lengthy process of cleaning, transporting and sinking the vessel is expected to take at least 1.5 years. □



S.S. United States is moored on the Delaware River in Philadelphia, Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2024.

Associated Press

NATO's new chief makes Ukraine support a top priority and says he will work with any US president

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The new head of NATO vowed on Tuesday to help shore up Western support for war-ravaged Ukraine and expressed confidence that he can work with whoever is elected president of the United States, the alliance's most powerful member, in November. "There can be no lasting security in Europe without a strong, independent Ukraine," new NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said in his first speech on taking office, and he affirmed a commitment made by the organization's leaders in 2008 that "Ukraine's rightful place is in NATO."

Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces are making advances in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's army has a shaky hold on part of the Kursk region in Russia, which has provided a temporary morale boost, but as casualties mount it remains outmanned and outgunned.

"The cost of supporting Ukraine is far, far lower than the cost we would face if we allow Putin to get his way,"



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, right, and the incoming NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte arrive for a transition ceremony at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024.
Associated Press

Rutte told reporters, a few hours after his predecessor Jens Stoltenberg handed the reins to him, along with a Viking gavel with which to chair future meetings.

But Ukraine's NATO membership remains a distant prospect. Several member countries, led by the U.S. and Germany, believe that Ukraine should not join while it's fighting a war. Rutte declined to speculate about what must happen before it can stand among NATO's ranks. Rutte

did single out China, and particularly Beijing's support for Putin. "China has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war in Ukraine. China cannot continue to fuel the largest conflict in Europe since the Second World War without this impacting its interests and reputation," he said.

NATO's new top civilian official also underlined the importance of keeping the trans-Atlantic bond between the United States, Canada and Europe strong, with U.S.

elections just a month away. Surveys suggest the election will be a close race. It could see the return of Donald Trump, whose bluster during his last term of office about low defense spending among European allies and Canada undermined the trust of NATO member countries.

It became an existential challenge, as smaller members feared that the U.S. under Trump would renege on NATO's security pledge that all countries must come to the rescue of any ally in trouble, the foundation stone the alliance is built on. □

French and US companies to invest \$10 billion to extract oil off Suriname's coast

By GEROLD ROZENBLAD
Associated Press

PARAMARIBO, Suriname (AP) — France's TotalEnergies and U.S. hydrocarbon company APA Corp. plan to invest \$10 billion to extract oil off the coast of Suriname in a historic investment for the South American country, officials announced Tuesday.

The first oil is expected by mid-2028, with an anticipated production of 220,000 barrels per day, according to TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanné, who flew to Suriname to personally announce the investment, the country's largest to date.

The so-called GranMorgu project focuses on an off-shore area believed to contain some 700 million



A man sits on the banks of the Suriname River in Paramaribo, Suriname, Aug. 10, 2010.

Associated Press

barrels of oil. It is adjacent to a successful ExxonMobil project in waters belonging to neighboring Guyana.

"Today is a historic day for Suriname," said a jubilant President Chan Santokhi, calling it "a day that will determine our future."

TotalEnergies will partner with APA Corp, a holding company for Apache Corporation, a Texas-based hydrocarbon exploration business, and Staatsolie, the local national oil producer representing the Surinamese government. □

Request for Proposal for Beach Property

Date: September 25, 2024

The owners of the properties consisting of two (2) adjacent parcels located at Spaans Lagoenweg #34 in Pos Chiquito Aruba hereby request proposals for the purchase of this beach front residential property. The property is a long lease land ("erfpacht") located on the inner road through Spaans Lagoenweg in Pos Chiquito, right on a beach strip with a spectacular ocean view. The property is the last beach front property of this size available on the Island.

Property Details:

- **Total size:** 1.240 m2
- **Location:** Spaans Lagoenweg #34, Pos Chiquito Aruba technically known as: (1) Aruba, Third Division, Section G, Number 1027 and (2) Aruba, Third Division, Section G, Number 3542.
- **Property Description:** The construction of the house is in good condition; however, it requires some maintenance. The house consists of three (3) bedrooms, two (2) bathrooms, a kitchen, a spacious living room, a dining room, an indoor patio, a laundry room, and a garage on the first floor. There is also a patio on the second floor.

Proposal Requirements:

Interested parties are invited to submit their proposals, which should include the following information:

1. **Purchase Price Offer:** Clearly state the proposed purchase price in Florin.
2. **Buyer Information:** Include the name and contact details of the buyer or buying entity. Anonymous Buyers will not be considered¹.
3. **Financing Details:** Provide information on how the purchase will be financed, including proof of funds or a bank letter stating the buyer has the means to finance his proposed purchase price.

The appraisal report can be viewed on:

<https://spaanslagoenweg34.relahq.com>. Viewing the property is also possible after making an appointment. To make an appointment or for more information you can contact the office of:

Wix Attorneys at Law
Avenida Millio Croes 101
Telephone: 582 3200
Email: vera@wixlegal.com

Proposals must be submitted in writing no later than Friday, November 8, 2024 at the office of Wix Attorneys at Law. After November 8, 2024, the owners will review all the offers and make a decision which offer will be accepted. All parties will be informed of the final decision within 14 days after November 8, 2024.

Information of the property can be found on:

<https://spaanslagoenweg34.relahq.com>



¹ Offers made through a broker will only be considered if the name of the buyer is disclosed.

Myanmar's military government launches a census seen as a way to gather information about opponents

By GRANT PECK

Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar's military government launched a nationwide census Tuesday, saying it will be used to compile voter lists for a general election promised for next year, even though much of the country is engulfed in civil war.

The census is widely seen as an effort to gather information to closely monitor opponents of military rule even more.

Census enumerators, mostly schoolteachers and local administrative workers, went door-to-door in the capital, Naypyitaw, accompanied by soldiers and police.

State television MRTV reported Tuesday evening the census had been carried out in all 14 of the country's regions and states, and the initial collected data is hoped to be released by the end of this year.

A group that leads the struggle against military rule, the shadow National Unity Government, has advised people to use "cau-



A census enumerator, right, asks questions to a family in Naypyitaw, Myanmar Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024 as the country holds a national census to compile voter lists for a general election and to analyze population and socioeconomic trends.

Associated Press

tion" in complying with the survey.

"Whether they are doing it for the fake elections or census, they are doing it to terrorize the people, so don't collaborate with them in these matters," said Kyaw Zaw, a spokesperson for the National Unity Government. "I would like to

say that all those who cooperate with the military council will be punished according to the law because their action is similar to encouraging and cooperating with the military's terrorist activities."

Pro-democracy guerrillas have also warned that those who help collect in-

formation will face reprisals. The Chin Brotherhood Alliance, which comprises five ethnic Chin militias from the northwestern Chin state, and the Dawei Defense Team, a group from the southern Tanintharyi region, warned in statements last month that they will take strong action against mili-

tary government personnel who participate in the survey.

Such guerrilla groups, which frequently target people associated with the military, carried out attacks during a three-week survey to compile voter lists in January 2023, when elections were still expected later that year. About a dozen people including two police officers and local officials were killed and four military personnel were captured during the attacks.

The military government is widely viewed as hoping the polls will legitimize its rule, which began after it seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

In a televised speech in early September, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, said the census information being gathered from Oct. 1 to Oct. 15 is crucial for compiling voter lists for a general election, but did not specify a date for the polls. He previously pledged to hold an election in 2025. □

Rebel group in Congo generates \$300,000 monthly in seized mining area, UN official says

By MARK BANCHEREAU

Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — A rebel group in Congo generates around \$300,000 a month in revenue through

its control of a mining area in the east of the country, a U.N. official said.

In April, the M23 a rebel group with alleged links to Rwanda seized the Ruba-

ya mining area in eastern Congo, which holds deposits of a key mineral used in the production of smartphones and computers.

Over 15% of the world's supply of tantalum, a rare metal extracted from coltan, comes from Rubaya, Bintou Keita, head of the U.N. mission in Congo, told the Security Council on Monday.

"Unless international sanctions are imposed on those benefiting from this criminal trade, peace will remain elusive and civilians will continue to suffer," Keita said.

Tantalum is among the minerals that were identified earlier this year in a letter from Congo's government questioning Apple about the tech company's knowl-

edge of "blood minerals" being smuggled in its supply chain.

The decadeslong conflict in eastern Congo has produced one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with more than 120 armed groups fighting for power, land and valuable mineral resources while others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups have been accused of mass killings, rapes and other human rights violations. The violence has displaced some 6 million people in the country's east.

M23, or the March 23 Movement, is a rebel military group mainly made up of ethnic Tutsis that broke away from the Congolese army just over a decade ago.

They staged a large offensive in 2012 and took over the provincial capital of Goma near the border with Rwanda, the same city they are threatening again. Congo alleges that Rwanda has been involved in war crimes in the east and U.S. and U.N. experts accuse it of giving military backing to M23. Rwanda denies the claim, but in February admitted that it has troops and missile systems in eastern Congo to safeguard its security, pointing to a buildup of Congolese forces near the border.

In July, U.N. experts estimated that between 3,000 and 4,000 Rwandan government forces are deployed in eastern Congo alongside M23, which has been making major advances. □



M23, rebels, who control Rubaya, a mining town in eastern Congo since May 2024 known for producing a key mineral used in smartphones, stand with their weapons in Kibumba, in the eastern of Democratic Republic of Congo, Dec. 23, 2022.

Associated Press



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively

visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors
Mr. Robert & Michele Boyle from Voorheesville New York, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's people.



- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba's Safety.
- Aruba's restaurants"
- "Allot of things to do"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses.

Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you're wanting to try a new

Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba

experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca

Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari

Known locally as Fisher-man's Hut, here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get


in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities.

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When purchasing the bundle for the first time at one of our stores, the Tourist SIM card is FREE and is tailored for visitors staying a few weeks in Aruba.

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Imagine strolling along the Aruban beaches after a productive workday or unwinding with a picturesque sunset as your backdrop to a successful day's work. Experience the ideal blend of work and relaxation in Aruba, supported by SETAR's seamless connectivity. Let us make your stay in Aruba an experience like no other. □

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. How-

ever, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous

one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that the there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker

braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

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Coming Soon: El Patio Tacos & Tequila

Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—Today we celebrate Valentine's Day, and what can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the west-

ern shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be

described as an experience!*

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to



hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the

sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell...



Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty,

and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to

guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors
Mr. William & Mrs. Robin Gauthier from Waterbury Connecticut, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Tamarijn Aruba

All Inclusive Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's beaches.
- Aruba is safe.
- "Tamarijn employees"
- "Weatherproof"
- "Never run out of things to do"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".





Article by Etnia Nativa

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Artistic imagination on ancestral expressions

Episode CCLXXIII- 273

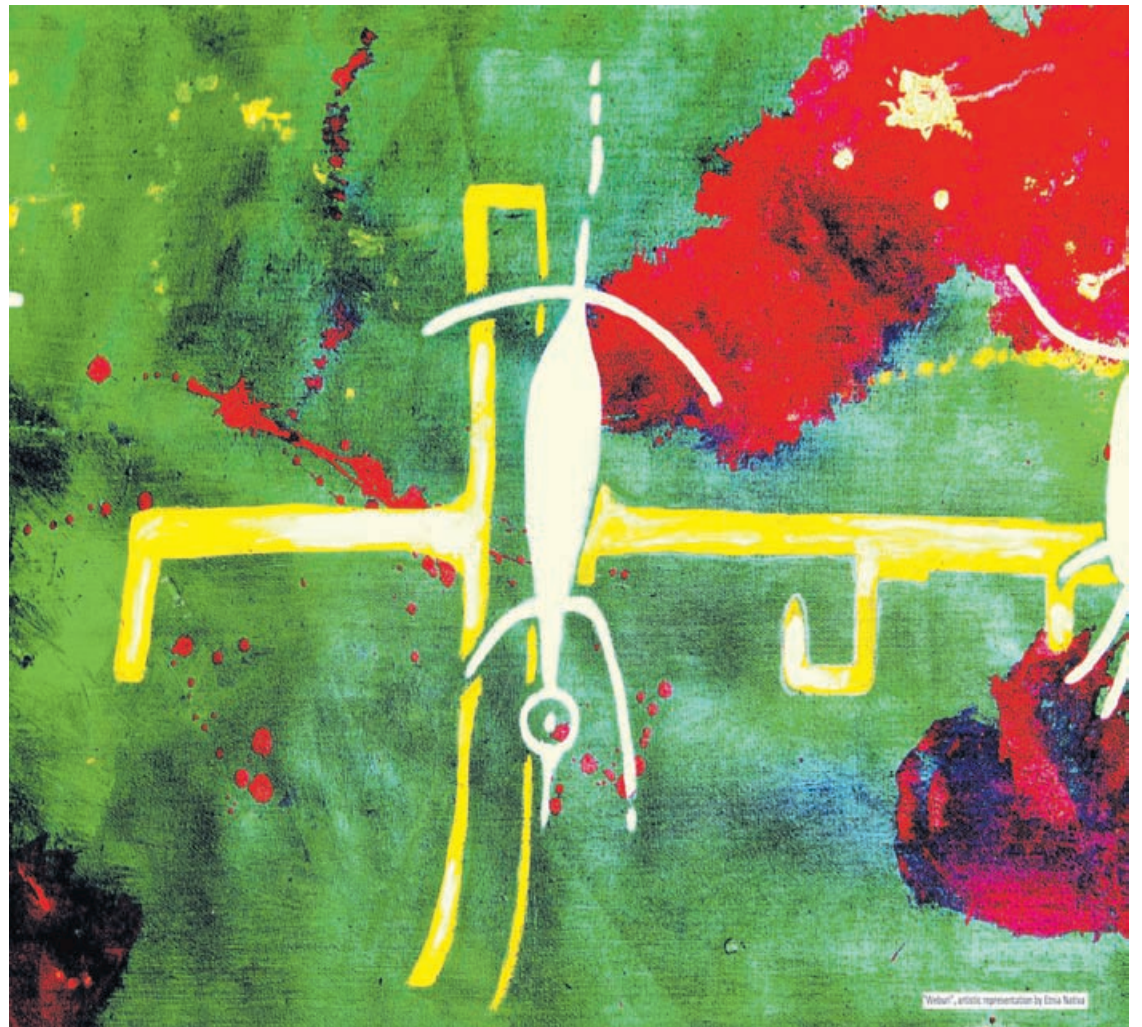
Etnia Nativa offers a unique native experience opportunity that blends education and entertainment. Interact with our exclusive team accessing a private facility and touring a beautiful property made with reused materials collected by its concept developer, top columnist, avocational archaeologist, and island's cultural expert. Book your visit and dive deep into the navel of Aruba.

During this episode, we will share a bit about the first human artistic expressions found all around the island. These were made by our prehistoric inhabitants, who had a cosmic vision of their terrestrial existence. Through mind-altering potions and powerful cultural symbols, they were able to figure out a spiritual connection to their tribal and social cosmology. These artistic expressions, also referred to as rock art, give us a valuable glimpse into their aesthetics, psychology, and a way to connect to our own ancestral origins, being an important testimony to relate to and link with our forefathers.

Aruba has over 300 early rock art expressions; some works were made on hard stone and others in limestone caves; years later, other similar symbols were baked out of refined clay into beautiful ceramic designs. This legacy is an important part of our native heritage and provides us with a portal to understand the sacred and mundane perspective of who were the first inhabitants of the island.

It's about all artistic expressions that have been practiced for hundreds and even thousands of years on our American continent through the creation of symbols that represent stellar constellations, animals, spiritual beings, objects, or people. Some scientists completely believe that many worldly rock art represents ancient space travelers. Rock art has always shared a message, an engraved historical fact on the faces of rocks all over the planet. Looking back at rock art, we discover that it covers a very long distance in time, since the oldest known rock art to be found in North America, Cooper Bison Skull near Fort Supply, Oklahoma, dates back 10,200 years BCA.

In Aruba, a total of 301 pictographs (including 3 petroglyphs) have been found. Of course, one drawing can be as little as a dot or line that may be intended as a separate drawing by the ancient artist. Still, by counting every separate representation that everybody would call a rock art expression, one can even reach a total of approximately 331 separate



drawing representations covering over some 17 sites.

While petroglyphs are carved or pecked into an exposed rock surface, pictographs are painted onto the surfaces. On our island, Petroglyphs are less common than pictographs. Pecking into the rock to create petroglyphs was accomplished with a hammer stone or stone chisel. Different pecking techniques create different styles. Incising or scratching with a sharp tool was also practiced. Incised designs are more expressive and detailed than pecked designs.

Pictographs are usually created on light-colored background, protected from the elements, granite, quartz diorite (Batholite), or limestone surfaces, such as in cave walls and cave ceilings. Stylized animals, humans, and geometric object designs are common subjects. Pictograph pigments and binders were probably obtained from soot, vegetal pigments, sea animals, blood, or pulverized minerals. The colors generally used were red, orange, white, and black. Red pigment probably came from hematite or iron oxide; orange from a combination of hematite, ochre, calcium, lichen, or

Brazil wood.

The official native rock artist was often a mystical healer, herbal blender, and color creator, but probably because of his power to heal and commune with the supernatural, he inspired creativity in himself and in others. They were undoubtedly a continuation of the first surviving shaman migrations passed through Bering more than thirty thousand years ago, and in our native language they are well known as "curanderos or curiosos" (**see "Island Insight" episode 269).

If you liked our native stories and are interested in diving deeper into learning the true identity of Aruba, a visit to Etnia Nativa would be a fantastic choice. We have been a trendsetting entity since 1994, as a co-founder of projects such as Arikok National Park, the Archaeological Museum, and the Artisan Foundation, among others. Every week, this newspaper shares our valuable knowledge. Don't miss the opportunity to feel the island's spirit through our real stories that are not just remembered; they resonate, they're felt, and they stir souls to the bone. Book your visit: WhatsApp +297 592 2702 etnianaativa03@gmail.com . □



National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state



that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two

tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca

Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



CROSSWORD

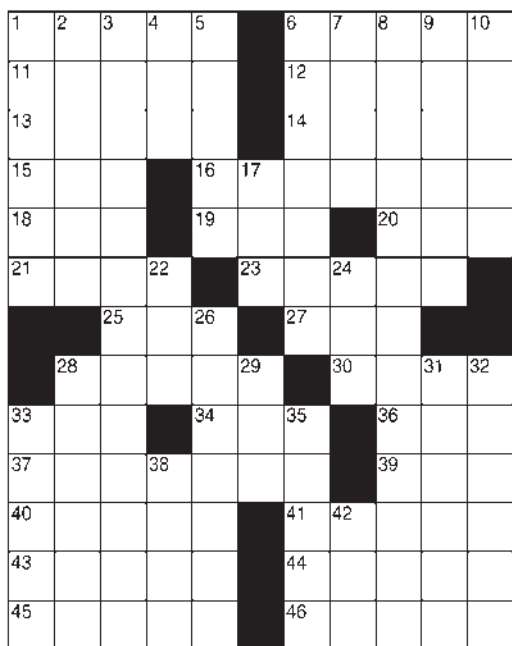
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 39 German article
- 6 Locker room need
- 11 Strutting
- 12 Bakery come-on
- 13 Stallone role
- 14 Woolly ones
- 15 Lincoln nickname
- 16 Heavy waves
- 18 Yang's counter-part
- 19 Long lunch
- 20 TV's "Science Guy" Bill
- 21 Robe feature
- 23 Sculpted trunk
- 25 Failure
- 27 Word of accord
- 28 Skeleton makeup
- 30 "Beetle Bailey" dog
- 33 Letter after sigma
- 34 Pool need
- 36 Coffee dispenser
- 37 Consistent with one's reputation
- DOWN**
- 40 Michael of Monty Python
- 41 Book part
- 43 Bumbling
- 44 Put up
- 45 Lawyer's workload
- 46 Finishes last
- 1 Uses an aerosol
- 2 Mecca's place
- 3 Tennis tourney division
- 4 Rickety boat
- 5 Smells

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OWLS EXTENT
WATERBED
NOTSOBAD
FRACAS EVA
LOPED SPLIT
AMP ATEASE
TASTE BUD
BLIND BID
DEMOED LYRE
ATONCE ETON
MAMET RENT

Yesterday's answer

- 6 16-ounce beer can
- 7 Spoken
- 8 Feminist field
- 9 Beginning stage
- 10 Director Hallström
- 17 Ump's call
- 22 Gaul invader
- 24 Old auto
- 26 Pours, as port
- 28 Split item
- 29 Day warmer
- 31 Spell
- 32 Starts
- 33 Subject
- 35 Old auto
- 38 Ready to pick
- 42 Old hand



3-8

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-8 CRYPTOQUOTE

YBCJ'F IZFG HJAFBFGJKG WKO
DAQJKG PDJFGBZK BF, TMWG
WAJ NZD OZBKQ CZA ZGMJAF?

— IWAGBK YDGMJA LBKQ SA.
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LIFE IS NAUGHT BUT FROTH AND BUBBLES, TWO THINGS STAND LIKE STONE: KINDNESS IN ANOTHER'S TROUBLES; COURAGE IN OUR OWN. — ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

Cruise ship Schedule: October 01 - 13 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	01	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
WED	02	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
THU	03	WORLD EXPLORER	08.00	23.59	C	1
SUN	06	FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-
TUE	08	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SUN	13	FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

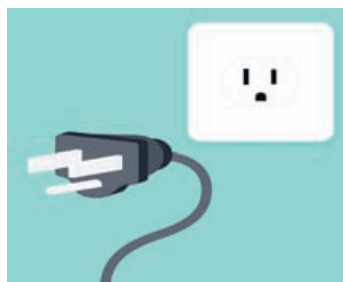
lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7

Helene and other storms dumped a whopping 40 trillion gallons of rain on the South

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**
AP Science Writer

More than 40 trillion gallons of rain drenched the Southeast United States in the last week from Hurricane Helene and a run-of-the-mill rainstorm that sloshed in ahead of it — an unheard of amount of water that has stunned experts.

That's enough to fill the Dallas Cowboys' stadium 51,000 times, or Lake Tahoe just once. If it was concentrated just on the state of North Carolina that much water would be 3.5 feet deep (more than 1 meter). It's enough to fill more than 60 million Olympic-size swimming pools.

"That's an astronomical amount of precipitation," said Ed Clark, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Water Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. "I have not seen something in my 25 years of working at the weather service that is this geographically large of an extent and the sheer volume of water that fell from the sky." □

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After playing Weird Barbie, Kate McKinnon's new children's book also celebrates being uniquely you

By **ALICIA RANCILIO**
Associated Press

If you find it odd that Kate McKinnon chose her first book to be for middle-grade kids, the former "Saturday Night Live" star says, think again.

"I find sketch comedy and middle school to be very similar," she said recently over Zoom. "There can be an unabashed silliness in middle grade that I have found only in sketch comedy."

"The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," now available, follows the three Porch sisters, Gertrude, Eugenia, and Dee-Dee, who feel that they don't fit in their hoity-toity town. They live with their snooty aunt and uncle and equally snooty seven cousins all named Lavinia. When the Porch girls are kicked out of school, they find a new mentor in an outrageous scientist with worms in her hair named Millicent Quibb. In a Q&A, McKinnon spoke about her childhood and "The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," which she wrote mostly from her bed. "I ended up staying in bed for a year,



Kate McKinnon arrives at the 77th annual Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 5, 2020, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

basically," she laughed. The plan is that this is book No. 1 in a series.

Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Some themes in this book are about identity. It would be fitting if you wrote this while filming "Barbie." Did you?

MCKINNON: I started writing this before "SNL," and worked on it throughout, whenever I had a moment, and picked it right back up after I left. I like weirdos. I am a weirdo. I like playing weirdos, and I like reaching out to fellow weirdos. And this was just another venue

for doing that.

AP: What was it like going from the hectic, repetitive pace of "SNL" to writing fulltime?

MCKINNON: I was surprised by how much it felt like performing. I felt like I was improvising.

It felt like sitting in a room

and writing a sketch for "SNL," but then you just have a lot more time to revise. I absolutely love it. I'm an introvert, so writing by myself does not bother me. As much as I miss my colleagues, it suits me in some way.

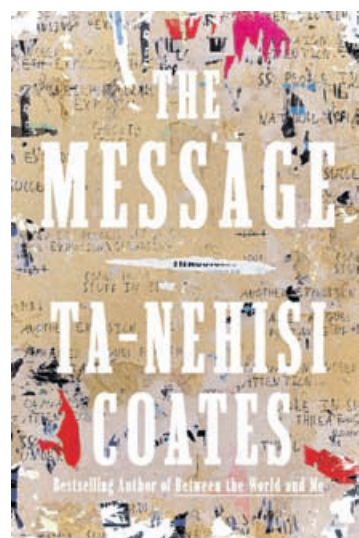
AP: In the book, the Porch sisters find a true mentor in Millicent who encourages them to be who and how they want. Who was your Millicent growing up?

MCKINNON: I had parents who celebrated my weird, little activities and let me take the clamshells home when we had linguine and clams at a restaurant. They bought me little archeological kits and just really fostered whatever esoteric interest I had. I also had teachers who helped me and supported me. Sometimes a magical adult swoops in and fosters the gifts you were born with that other people are telling you are bad.

AP: The book is silly and funny. Did you ever make yourself laugh while writing?

MCKINNON: I do. I enjoy names. I think funny names are a whole art in and of itself. I was proud of the names I came up with. □

Book Review: Ta-Nehisi Coates visits Senegal, South Carolina and the Middle East for 'The Message'



This cover image released by One World shows "The Message" by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

(One World via Associated Press)

By **ROB MERRILL**
Associated Press

Ta-Nehisi Coates always writes with a purpose, so naming his latest collection "The Message" is nothing if not on-brand. But what's the actual message? Consisting of three pieces of non-fiction, the book is part memoir, part travelogue, and part writing primer. It covers his recent trips to Dakar, Senegal; Columbia, South Carolina; and various cities and towns in the Middle East.

He writes in the introduction that the essays fulfill a promise to a Howard University writing class he taught in 2022: "I bring my belated assignment... I've

addressed these notes directly to you, though I confess that I am thinking of young writers everywhere whose task is nothing less than doing their part to save the world."

Coates features snippets of his biography in each essay, but always returns to lessons for writers, as in this reflection during his first ever visit to Africa: "There are dimensions in your words rhythm, content, shape, feeling... The accretion of imperfect, discomfiting life must be seen and felt so that the space in your mind, gray, automatic, and square, fills with angle, color, and curve." These pilgrimages, for him, help

ground his powerful writing about race. As he reflects on his visit to Gorée Island, the place from which tens of millions of Africans departed into a lifetime of slavery, he confesses to "welling up, grieving for something, in the grips of some feeling I am still, even as I write this, struggling to name."

The second essay examines racism closer to home, as Coates journeys to a South Carolina town where the school board was considering banning his 2015 book "Between the World and Me" because, in part, students in an Advanced Placement English class felt "ashamed to be Cau-

casian" when they read it. Supporters of the teacher manage to show up in enough force to defeat the ban, but Coates sees in it the power of story. A middle-aged white teacher in Chapin, South Carolina, read his book a letter to his teenage-son about the realities of being Black in the United States and decided to use it as an example of how to write a persuasive essay.

"We have lived under a class of people who ruled American culture with a flaming cross for so long that we regularly cease to notice the import of being ruled at all," writes Coates. □

MLB's season turns to October competition, where legacies and fortunes can be made

By DAVID BRANDT
AP Baseball Writer

Japanese superstar Shohei Ohtani has put up some of the best regular-season numbers in baseball history over the past six months. Bobby Witt Jr. is a precocious 24-year-old who just won the American League batting title.

They've both proven they are excellent at baseball. Now it's time to see if they're good at October baseball.

"The mound is 60 feet, 6 inches away, first base is 90 feet away," Witt said on Monday. "It's the same game I've played since I was little, and so just go out there, enjoy every moment and take it all in."

The Kansas City shortstop was trying not to put too many expectations on himself before the biggest games of his professional career. That's probably smart.

But there's little doubt that October competition is a little different. It all starts on Tuesday when the Tigers-Astros, Royals-Orioles, Mets-Brewers and Braves-Padres



Houston Astros' Alex Bregman hits an RBI sacrifice fly during the third inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels, Sunday, Sept. 22, 2024, in Houston. (AP Ph

Associated Press

begin their best-of-three Wild Card Series.

The Yankees, Guardians, Dodgers and Phillies all earned a bye until the Division Series, which begins on Saturday.

Everyone feels the pressure of the playoffs. Owners, fans, players. Yankees slugger Juan Soto, Astros third

baseman Alex Bregman, Orioles outfielder Anthony Santander and Mets first baseman Pete Alonso are among the upcoming free agents who could increase their value by millions with good postseason performances.

Soto was the World Series MVP in 2019 when the

Washington Nationals won their title. A similar performance over the next few weeks could send his asking price this winter into the stratosphere.

The postseason is also where legacies are made. Yankees slugger Aaron Judge is already one of the most productive sluggers in

the storied franchise's history. He smashed 58 homers this season two years after a 62-homer campaign and his tape measure homers are the stuff of legend.

But he doesn't have a championship ring, and that's the expectation in the Bronx. The Yankees haven't won a title since 2009.

"I think there's no question he's one of the franchise's greatest players," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "But he's playing for (championships). That's why he does this, not to rack up personal accolades. He embodies that. He lives that. I'm sure winning it all would add a level to his legacy."

Philadelphia's Bryce Harper is another one of this generation's great players who has never won a title. The two-time MVP led the Phillies to the World Series in 2022 earning MVP of the National League Championship Series along the way before losing to the Houston Astros for the title. It's one of the few missing pieces of a stellar career. □

MLB pitchers threw fewer complete games but dominated batters this year

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There were a record-low 26 complete games in the major leagues this season four fewer than Catfish Hunter threw in 1975 and the big league batting average dropped to .243, among the five-lowest figures since 1900. Pitchers threw just 16 individual shutouts, matching 2022's total as the least in a non-shortened season since 1874.

Baserunners stole 3,617 bases, the third-most since 1900 after 4,574 in 1914 and 4,108 in 1915. The total was up from 3,503 last year and 2,486 in 2022, the last season before rule changes limited pickoff attempts and enlarged bases to 18-inch squares from 15. The 79% success rate this year

was down slightly from 80.2% last year.

The complete game total was fewer than even the 29 in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season. There were 2,429 games played this year and 898 in 2020, when opening day was delayed until July 23.

Philadelphia's Cristopher Sánchez, Atlanta's Max Fried and Toronto's Kevin Gausman were the only pitchers with two complete games.

The complete game total was down from 35 last year and 36 in 2022. There were 50 in 2021, 104 in 2015, 209 in 2003 and 622 in 1988.

No pitcher threw more than one shutout.

The final batting average of .2433 was higher in the post-1900 era than only .237 in 1968, .239 in 1908,

.242 in 1967 and .2427 in 2022. The average rose to .248 last year in the first season of restrictions on defensive shifts. This year's figure was impacted by a .239 average through April, down from .249 last year.

There were just seven qualified .300 hitters, the second-fewest above only the six in 1968. There were 55 in 1999. Home runs dropped to 1.12 per team per game from 1.21 last year but above the 1.07 in 2022. The high of 1.39 was in 2019. Humidor use for baseball storage expanded from two teams to five in 2020 and was standardized throughout the major leagues in 2022.

Average four-seam fastball velocity was a record 94.3 mph, up from 94.2 mph in 2022, 93.9 mph in 2022 and 93.7 mph in 2021, accord-

ing to MLB Statcast. It was 91.9 mph when MLB started tracking in 2008.

The total of pitches at 100 mph or higher dropped to 3,321 from a record 3,880 in 2023 and 3,369 in 2022.

Oakland's Mason Miller had the most 100 mph pitches with 510, followed by Arizona's Justin Martínez (426), Cleveland's Emmanuel Clase (285) and Minnesota's Jhoan Durán (256). □



Philadelphia Phillies' Cristopher Sánchez pitches during the second inning of a baseball game against the Chicago Cubs, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024, in Philadelphia.

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Henry, Flacco are NFL graybeards who have found new life with new teams as have Darnold and Barkley

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

Some NFL veterans are making the most of second chances. Or even their fourth or fifth.

Derrick Henry looks just as good at 30 years old in a Baltimore Ravens uniform as he did as a twentysomething franchise player in Tennessee and Saquon Barkley is tearing it up in Philadelphia with a visit coming up in October to the Meadowlands to face his former teammates with the New York Giants.

For Sam Darnold, his fourth stop on an NFL journey that began as a baby-faced 20-year-old is proving the charm and ageless Joe Flacco is still slinging it now with his fifth team.

It's not like Henry was washed up when he bid a fond farewell to the Titans and their fans following his final game at Nissan Stadium in a Tennessee uniform eight months ago, but he's making north of 30 look just as good as he did in his 20s. Henry took the Ravens' first offensive snap 87 yards to the end zone for the longest touchdown run in franchise history Sunday night, the bellwether burst in a 199-yard performance that propelled the Ravens to a 35-10 shellacking of the previously unbeaten Buffalo Bills that served the NFL's biggest statement in Week 4.

The 247-pound Henry reached 21.29 mph on the run according to NFL NextGen Stats. That ties the fourth-fastest speed by a ball carrier this season.

For good measure, Henry caught his first touchdown pass since 2019 and now has half a dozen touchdowns in four games for



Baltimore Ravens running back Derrick Henry, right, runs with the ball as Buffalo Bills linebacker Dorian Williams tries to stop him during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024, in Baltimore.

Baltimore, half of what he had in his final season in Nashville.

Not bad for a guy four months shy of his 31st birthday, 18 yards short of 10,000 for his career and just five trips to the end zone from an even 100.

The fountain of youth, which seems to have soaked Darnold in Minnesota and fellow 27-year-old Barkley in Philadelphia, also splashed Flacco, four months shy of 40 and light years since his days as Baltimore's franchise ironman.

Flacco, that rare star-turned-backup, came off the bench in relief of an injured Anthony Richardson to lead the Indianapolis Colts past the previously unblemished Pittsburgh Steelers 27-24.

On his fourth team since his split from the Ravens after the 2018 season, the league's reigning Comeback Player of the Year threw for a pair of touch-

downs against a Steelers team he's beaten 11 times as a starter.

Flacco went 16 of 26 for 168 yards and two touchdowns double what Broncos rookie Bo Nix has in four full games so far.

When CBS sideline reporter Aditi Kinkhabwala asked him afterward if he ever ages, Flacco replied, "When you're out here in this environment, no. You feel like you're 12 years old."

When Kinkhabwala told him, "Anthony Richardson told us that you were cooler than he thought," Flacco retorted: "Listen, he told me that his mom is eight days older than I am. So, there's no chance in the world that he thinks I'm cool."

NBC analyst Chris Simms sure does.

"How about Joltin' Joe?" Simms cracked on "Football Night in America." "Does this guy ever get old? Does

his arm ever wear out? He's throwing lasers all around." Looking young again.

Like Henry in Baltimore, Darnold in Minneapolis and Barkley in Philly.

Henry is averaging 6 yards per carry with the Ravens, well ahead of his already impressive 4.7-yard career average.

Barkley, selected second overall in 2018 between Baker Mayfield, who found a home in Tampa Bay last year in his fourth NFL stop, and Darnold, is averaging just shy of 6 yards a run for the Eagles.

That's also well ahead of his 4.4-yard average with the Giants, who let him get away in free agency only to join a division rival. Barkley's four touchdown runs put him on pace to top the career-best 11 times he scored during his rookie season with the Giants in 2018.

Darnold has positioned the Vikings (4-0) as the NFL's

September Surprise after leading Minnesota to a 31-29 win at Lambeau Field on Sunday.

Darnold spent a year under the tutelage of Kyle Shanahan in San Francisco before signing a one-year, \$10 million deal with Minnesota. He's completing 68.9% of his throws, a significant jump from his career average of right around 60%.

Of course, not all of the league's graybeards are looking so green.

Aaron Rodgers looked every bit of his 40 years in a 10-9 loss to Denver on a sloppy, soggy afternoon at the Meadowlands where he was held without a touchdown pass.

"The weather sucked," Rodgers said. "But so did some of my throws."

That might serve as an apt description of the play around him, too.

The Jets were whistled for 15 penalties, including five false starts, which brought into question whether Rodgers' cadence something the quarterback has used to his advantage his entire career to confuse defenses is an issue for his own offense.

After the game, coach Robert Saleh questioned "whether or not we're good enough or ready to handle all the cadence." Rodgers called the five pre-snap penalties "an outlier" and suggested that while adjusting his cadence is "one way to do it," he added: "The other way is to hold them accountable." That echoes Rodgers' criticism of his teammates in his waning days in Green Bay, when he often lamented the inexperience of his much younger supporting cast. □